

## Message Text

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17

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 PM-04 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 INT-05 /086 W

----- 115882

P R 250834Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4376

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, PO

SUBJ: LIMITED SUPPORT FOR METAL WORKERS STRIKE

REF: LISBON 5603 DTG 231021Z SEP 75

1. IN SPITE OF CLAIMS OF MASSIVE WORKER SUPPORT FOR THE ONE HOUR STRIKE CALLED BY THE METAL WORKERS FEDERATION, PRELIMINARY REPORTS INDICATE THAT SUPPORT WAS SPARSE. THE STRIKE WAS CALLED FOR 10 TO 11:00 AM SEPTEMBER 24 FOR ALL OF PORTUGAL'S 220,000 METAL WORKERS BY A MAJORITY VOTE OF THE FEDERATION'S UNIONS.

2. WORKERS IN SEVERAL IMPORTANT PLANTS IN THE LISBON AREA

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(E.G., GENERAL MOTORS) ARE KNOWN TO HAVE IGNORED THE STRIKE CALL

ENTIRELY EVEN THOUGH THE LOCAL UNION LEADERSHIP SUPPORTED THE STOPPAGE. OTHER FACTORIES IN THE LISBON AREA SHUT DOWN BUT ADHERENCE WAS SPOTTY. AMCONSUL OPORTO REPORTS THE STRIKE HAD PRACTICALLY NO EFFECT IN THE NORTH. THE 3,000 WORKERS OF THE OLIVA PLANT (ITT) VOTED TEN TO ONE IN OPPOSITION TO THE STRIKE.

3. PURPOSE OF THE STRIKE WAS TWO-FOLD, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC. POLITICALLY THE STRIKE WAS AN ATTEMPT BY THE METAL WORKERS' COMMUNIST LEADERSHIP TO REMIND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PCP'S CONTINUING POWER IN LABOR. ECONOMICALLY, THE STRIKE HOPED TO FORCE THE NEWLY INSTALLED SIXTH PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT TO PROMULGATE A DECREE SIGNED BY THE FIFTH PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT DURING ITS LAST HOURS IN OFFICE WHICH GRANTED THE METAL WORKERS THE BULK OF THEIR CONTRACT DEMANDS. MANAGEMENT MAINTAINS IT IS UNABLE TO PAY THE INCREASED COSTS WHICH WOULD BE INCURRED. THE SIXTH GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED EARLY SEPTEMBER 24 THAT IT WILL REVIEW ALL OF THE STILL PENDING DECREES SIGNED BY THE FIFTH GOVERNMENT BEFORE AUTHORIZING THEIR FINAL PROMULGATION.

4. COMMENT: THE EMBASSY'S PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT IS THAT THE STRIKE, LIKE THE ONE HOUR NATIONAL WORK STOPPAGE OF AUGUST 19, WAS A FAILURE. THE FEDERATION'S INCUMBENT, PRO-INTERSINDICAL LEADERSHIP (SLATE A) IMPOSED THE STRIKE CALL OVER THE OPPOSITION OF THE COMMISSION OF WORKER UNITY (SLATE B). THE OUTCOME WILL DISCREDIT THE INCUMBENTS AND IMPROVE THE CHANCES OF THE TWO OPPOSITION SLATES IN THE FEDERATION ELECTIONS TO BE HELD OCTOBER 4.  
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